

Salem Free Public Library
(John Tyler Building)
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
112 West Broadway (State Route 49)
Salem
Salem County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1155

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SALEM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
(JOHN TYLER BUILDING)

HABS No. NJ-1155

Location: 112 West Broadway (State Route 49), Salem, Salem County, New Jersey

Significance: This late nineteenth-century building is one of Salem's premiere Victorian buildings, probably influenced by proximity to the high-style influences coming out of Philadelphia. It also reflects Salem's prosperity at that time.

Description: This two-story Victorian Romanesque block is essentially an L-plan formed by a large gable-roof unit connected to a hipped-roof wing. The foundation is uncoursed ashlar, the lower walls uncoursed polygonal stone, and the upper walls red brick. The entry is through a recessed archway located at the crotch of the wings, where there is a one-story foyer-like block with a hip roof that terminates at the eave line of the larger block. The upper portion of the roof is patterned slate shingles, the lower areas are asphalt shingles; modest cresting articulates the gable-roof block. The fenestration is varied, consisting mostly of three-light double casements; on the street-facing gable end these are set in vertical recesses that frame the first- and second-floor openings. The existence of an interior chimney is reflected on the gable end by corbelling.

History: Built in 1885 after local interest in a library was revived by John Tyler, its namesake. Tyler began his campaign in 1863 and served as the library board president the same year. The Salem library was originally founded by subscribers on 14 June 1804. Five years later the Library Company of Salem disbanded and it did not resume until 1843. The company disbanded yet again until 1863 when Tyler resuscitated it.

Sources: Broadway Historic District National Register nomination, ref #92000098, (March 5 1992).

Cushing, Thomas, and Charles W. Sheppard. History of Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland Counties. Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1883.

Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991.

Project Information: The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Kimberly R. Sebold (University of Delaware). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.

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